

Official Record Copy
Office of Personnel

OP MEMORANDUM NO. 20-31-55

2 November 1982

OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Environmental Differentials Payable to Wage Employees

RESCISSION: OPM 20-31-44 dated 3 April 1978, same subject

1. Policy

a. It is Agency policy to follow, to the extent practicable, Federal regulations governing the payment of environmental differentials to wage employees for exposure to various degrees of hazards, physical hardships, and working conditions of an unusually severe nature.

b. Agency components are required to take action to achieve the objective of eliminating or reducing to the lowest level possible all hazards, physical hardships and working conditions of an unusually severe nature. When component action does not overcome such conditions, an environmental differential will be authorized when an employee's exposure to the conditions could cause significant physical distress or discomfort or could result in significant injury or illness, or death. Environmental differentials will be authorized only to the extent that such exposures and work situations are consistent with the categories listed in the schedule of environmental differentials contained in Appendix J of FPM Supplement 532-1.

2. Schedule of Environmental Differentials

The schedule of environmental differentials defines the categories of hazards, physical hardships and working conditions for which the differentials are payable; it also includes the differential rate for each category. The examples given in the schedule are illustrative only and are not necessarily inclusive of all exposures which may be consistent with the conditions given in the category definitions. Copies of the schedule may be obtained from the Position Management and Compensation Division, Office of Personnel.

3. Entitlements and Limitations

a. A wage employee who is exposed to a situation for which an environmental differential is authorized is entitled to the appropriate differential regardless of whether the employee has a full-time or intermittent tour of duty; is on a regular assignment or on detail; or is serving under a temporary or permanent appointment.

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b. An environmental differential will not be authorized for a wage employee whose exposure to hazards, physical hardships, or unusually severe working conditions has been a factor in establishing the grade of that employee's job.

c. An environmental differential may be authorized either on the basis of actual exposure during all paid hours in a calendar day, or on the basis of actual exposure measurable in hours and minutes. When an environmental differential is authorized for exposure measurable in hours and minutes, a minimum of one hour of differential pay for the exposure must be paid. For exposure beyond one hour, the employee will be paid in one-quarter hour increments for each 15 minutes or portion of 15 minutes worked.

d. If an employee is subjected to more than one hazard, physical hardship or working condition of an unusually severe nature at the same time, he or she will be paid for the exposure which results in the highest differential, but will not be paid more than one differential for the same hours of work.

e. The amount of the differential to which the employee is entitled is determined by multiplying the percentage rate authorized for the described exposure by the second rate for grade WG-10 on the regular nonsupervisory wage schedule for the area.

f. An environmental differential is included as part of the employee's basic rate of pay and will be used to compute premium pay (overtime, holiday, or Sunday work), the amount from which retirement deductions are made, and the amount on which group life insurance is based.

g. Environmental differentials will not be approved on a retroactive basis.

3. Responsibilities

a. Operating officials and supervisory personnel are responsible for:

(1) Recognizing conditions and situations of employees for which an environmental differential is payable under one of the categories listed in the schedule of environmental differentials.

(2) Submitting requests for payment of environmental differentials through the appropriate Deputy Director or Head of Independent Office to the Director of Personnel for approval.

(3) Certifying on attachments to time and attendance reports as to the frequency and duration of employee exposures to hazards, physical hardships and working conditions of an unusually severe nature for which an environmental differential has been approved, in accordance with the categories listed in the schedule.

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b. The Director of Personnel will approve requests for payment of environmental differentials that are consistent with the categories and differential rates listed in the schedule.



/ James N. Glerum
Director of Personnel

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